Call for Symposium on East Timor

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Fifteen years have passed since East Timor became an issue at the United Nations.

Although it has caused about 100,000 victims (Asahi Shimbun July 31) and this death toll is the highest in today's Asia except that in Cambodia, it still remains one of the most difficult issues which has still not been solved even by the UN Secretary-General's mediation due to deep-rooted conflicts among the parties involved. Moreover, the Portugese government recently began to accuse the Australian government for the latter's agreement with Indonesia to develop oil in the Timor Sea.

Seen from the world's tendency for democratization and the progress of solution of conflicts in Asia, it is hoped that there will be seen a progress of wide discussions on East Timor by parties involved or interested parties.

Japan has close connection with East Timor. It once occupied the territory for three and a half years during World War II and caused many deaths on Timorese. Up until now it has provided the largest amount of its Official Development Assistance to Indonesia in accumulation.

Therefore, we believe that it is meaningful if fruitful discussions are held in Japan toward a peaceful solution of the issue of East Timor.

This symposium on East Timor does not intend to draw a specific conclusion but does intend, from its neutral and impartial position, to hear claims of all sides and to exchange perceptions regarding what happened and is happening there. Our purpose is only that each side presents what it thinks.

Therefore, hoping that the symposium will deepen our understandings on the issue with useful discussions toward a peaceful solution, we, convenors, call for a wide cooperation.

Convenors

Prof. Kenichi Goto (Waseda University, Indonesian Studies)
Prof. Masao Koizumi (Setsunan University, Indonesian Studies)
Prof. Motoko Shudo (Komazawa University, Indonesian Studies)
Prof. Masao Yamaguchi (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Anthropology)
Prof. Takashi Ebasi (Hosei University, International Law)
Prof. Susumu Takahashi (Tokyo University, History of International Relations)
Prof. Ikuro Shimada (Shimane University, Geology)
Mr. Hyosuke Kujiraoka (House of Representatives[LDP])
Mr. Hiroshi Sawada (House of Represetatives[SP], Vice-president of Japan-Indonesia Parliamentarian League)
Ms. Manae Kubota (House of Councillors[SP], President of Diet Members Forum on East Timor)
Mr. Takayoshi Wada (House of Councillors[Komei], Vice-president of Japan-Portugal Parliamentary Association in the House of Councillors)
Mr. Tetsuya Tsukushi (TBS Newscaster)
Mr. Kotaro Yamamoto (Musician)
Mr. Munetoshi Maejima (General Secretary of National Christian Council in Japan)
Mr. Ohtori Kurino (former Japanese Ambassador for Cambodia)
Mr. Hiroshi Nakajima (Executive Director of the Japan Pacific Society)